The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Seasons.

Souls have seasons. Youth with springtime
Breaketh into voice and bloom,
Beareth in her breast the sweetness
Of the golden days to come—
  Hush!—a something dawneth straightway,
  Openeth a celestial gateway.

Love, with summer. On his bosom,
Ruffled by no changeful wind,
Calm reposeth, full and favoured
All His bounties that is kind:
  Yet a silence strangely reigneth
  Where the Dove alone complaineth.

Is it that with Love as summer—
All its sweetnesses in view—
He is silent, by the picture
Waked to reading it anew?
  Does he, mournful in his gladness,
  Bode, "Hereafter cometh sadness?"

Even so. The hill-top mounted,
Straight declineth then the way,
It is fore-ordained of Angels
That the night succeed the day—
  After laughter falleth sighing,
  After living cometh dying.

Even so. But so 'tis pleasant,
When the soul hath reached its gloom,
When the silence speaketh only
Of the silence of the tomb,
  When no more the Dove complaineth
  For that ne'er a dove remaineth.

Then, O friends, 'tis well to whisper
Hopeful to the wearied soul—
Patience heart! the night it endeth,
Way-worn feet have reached the goal—
  After sighing falleth laughter,
  After Death the great Hereafter.

C. C. FRASER-TYTLER.

"What Lack I Yet?"

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

LUKE XVIII. 22.

"*Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*"

There are a certain class of persons envious of the reputation of Jesus, who are always trying to find him out in some wrong or folly, and the whole of this story is a famous tilting ground of theirs. They say—If his saying to the young ruler were carried out by all men, society would cease to exist. It is the cry of a mere enthusiast, impracticable, and since it is impracticable, the religion of which it is the absolute demand, is not fit for men. Lay it aside, then, and turn to what is practical.

This is that want of historical intelligence which is so marked in persons victimized by bigotry. They would do anything to set wrong the thing they hate. They isolate a phrase from the particular circumstances in which Christ said it, give it a universal meaning, and then show that the universal meaning is foolish. It is a pretty trick, and it succeeds pretty well with those who do not take the trouble to refer to the original passage in which the phrase occurs. The person who here applied to Christ was in a special frame of mind. Christ tested the particular temper

he was in by a particular demand fitted to that particular case, and fitted moreover to the class he was specially looking for at that time—men who were willing to follow him to the death in missionary work. "What lack I yet," said the young ruler, longing for the ideal life? Then Christ, seeing the spiritual passion of the perfect in the man, said, Here is the light that fits that passion. "Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and follow me." Christ would never have thought of applying that test to men who had the business of the world to do. He would never have said it to men who had not first felt the want of the ideal. He always waited for the state of mind to arise before he spoke to it. Not, indeed, till his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray," did he give them the Lord's Prayer.

Again. What he needed himself for the time was followers who would carry on his work. Missionaries—men wholly detached from every thing but one thing. He was anxious that *all* should believe in him, and follow his spirit. But he knew that the greater part of these were men who had to do the work of the world. Let them love the Father, and do their work, and live in His spirit of love to their fellow-men. Go home—he said to the madman he had healed, and who wished to follow him—and stay with your own folk. But here was one who wanted more, who wanted to live a life higher than any he had yet conceived of, the ideal life of love in its ideal form. For that, for doing my work, you must give up all. Sell, give, and come with me. It is absurd to taunt that as being extravagance; why, it was common sense! It is that which is demanded now from all missionaries. Seen thus—and every one can see that this explanation is close to the facts as they lie in the story, and fits them all—the phrase of Jesus is not open to any of these objections. It is particular—said to one in a special temper of soul, said for a special purpose, and full to the brim of that intelligent common sense in which the critics of it are wanting.

It was then a test. But what was tested? That which was tested was the yearning for the ideal spiritual life. What does one mean by the spiritual? It is that in men—to take Plato as an example—which desires after invisible ideas and their realities—absolute truth, not relative truth in matters of knowledge—absolute beauty, not relative beauty in matters of art—absolute righteousness and love, not the relative goodness of morality or the love that can be realized, in matters of conduct and passion; which desires in all these things that which it knows it cannot attain on earth, which it knows it can never wholly attain in eternity, but which it knows it can always move forward into, hour by hour. Therefore, it contains within itself the conception of incessant progress, but never of full attainment. That in us which so desires and has such aims, we call the Spirit of Man, for want of a better term. You see it presupposes immortality, and an infinite Being in whom Truth, Righteousness, Love, Beauty, are infinite, and in whom we shall pursue after these things for ever; and it differs from that which we call the intellect, and the conscience and the heart, when each acts alone, in this especially, that all these can be contented, but this cannot. Whatever it wins, it asks for more. It only breathes and has its being in upward flight; and it is its ineradicable uncontent, its passionate disturbance, which (in our complex being) transfers itself to the intellect and makes that unsatisfied with knowledge, and transfers itself to the heart and makes that unsatisfied with love, and transfers itself to the conscience and makes that unsatisfied with morality. So it keeps the whole nature in a ferment, and prevents it from rest by the infection of its own unsatisfaction.

It acts most passionately in matters of Beauty and of Religion. In Religion this is its first cry—"My soul is athirst for God." "Like as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God,"—for in God is all that it desires—Perfection, the Ideal Truth, Beauty, Love, and Righteousness. And when it is regnant in a man it carries him above all that is evil and mean, and puts the good things of this world, even its best things, such as work and love, into the second place and not the first. As to

wealth and the gathering of knowledge only as knowledge, or the search after finite beauty, or business, it makes them as dust and ashes in comparison with its desires; and were it not balanced by the other parts of our nature, would lead us away into the wilderness to die in rapturous contemplation, and end as evilly as any single part of our nature ends when it assumes a despotism. But it is balanced enough in these days, God knows! We are not likely to give the spirit too much to do, and when it does speak it is well to listen to it. It is time enough to repress it when it goes too far. But it does not go too far when it asserts itself towards union with God. Often, it is true, it fails, but nearly always it is the world in the heart which makes it feeble. As it soars, its wings droop, and it flutters broken-hearted down to earth, but even in its uttermost fainting it yet asserts its immortality in its cry—"Nothing in Heaven, nothing on earth, will ever content me, but that which I shall never attain, yet always press forward to—absolute union with God."

It is then an incessant want. "What lack I yet?" it cries, and for ever.

There are, of course, many people who may be said to be incapable of feeling this desire; and who, therefore, declare that there is nothing which corresponds to the desire, as if a man who could not see green, should declare that what others called green, but he thought to be red, could not exist. There is the well-satisfied moralist, who walks about quite happy in his well-ordered garden of good deeds, with the high walls round it that prevent him from seeing the ideal. "How quiet, how contented, how perfect all this is," he says, with a self-benignant smile, "I lack nothing." There is the person plunged in pleasure, hour by hour, joy dancing in his heart—"What else can I want?" he cries, "life is perfect." There is the worker of the world, who loves his work; all day long his pleasure is there—moment after moment filled like a cup below a fountain—"With this, and sleep, and food, I am content." There is the person of society, its victim or its victor, both utterly content with the bliss of the daily flutter or the daily common-place, or the daily servitude, or the daily triumph. They do not cry "What lack I yet?" Yet, in some of them that which they have trodden into the ground of their souls at times arises, white and wistful like a ghost, in silent night, in a lonely hour, in the midst of sudden sorrow, or when love for a moment has been true, and they hear the voice of their true self as of a stranger speaking. "What hast thou done to me," it cries, and says no more. And they who hear shiver for an instant and then forget. But their time will come when they shall remember; and then their cry will not be—"What lack I yet?"—but one more bitter far: "Lord, I lack all things. All I had was nothing."

Others there are more noble than these, who do feel the spiritual cry, who seek to find the ideal life, the ideal sacrifice; to realise adoration; to grasp the whole of knowledge, to foresee and believe in perfectness; religious souls—but binding all aspiration down within the limits of the imperfect love and righteousness of men, within the necessary boundaries of human knowledge, within the finite realm of a race doomed at the last to silence and extinction. These, more than all the others, deny what we call the spirit and its world, because they have made a substitute for it, and are proud of their substitute. Beyond this substitute, they lack nothing; and our aim, and our infinite desire, and our Infinite One in whom all perfectness is infinitely contained, are in their eyes only evil to dwell upon, because they cannot be known.

It is a pity for them, for they are not far from the kingdom of God, if they keep humility. They cannot as yet feel what they need to feel, and feeling it not, of course they cannot know it. Their time will also come, and they shall know that which they named unknowable. Eternal light shining through eternal love will glow around them, and the infinite surprise shall make them, at a touch, conscious of God and immortality.

These are those who never cry—"What lack I yet?" and of each class of them there are multitudes in the world.

But among them are never found two ranks of folk. One rank is of those who have the true nature of the artist; the other that of those who desire the unreachable ideal of love and righteousness. Both may be found in one

and the same man, as in Fra Angelico, but very frequently they are separate, and sometimes they exclude each other. Of that artist nature which always endeavours to express the inexpressible, to realise that which has no perfect form to the senses; which for ever, uncontented, seeks that which cannot be found, and knows that the thing it seeks it never can attain; ever believing in, but certain it will never grasp, absolute beauty, but living in its everlasting pursuit, and counting the greatest orrows of that pursuit greater joy than the pleasures of all the earth—of this nature—save just to touch it as an analogy to the religious nature—I do not speak.

My business is with the spiritual longing; and its testing.

Here it is in the young Ruler! a well-trained, well-educated young man, brought up in a household, such as many are in England, where fine conduct is almost ancestral! Rich, worthy of his responsibilities, eager to find them out to the full, seeking knowledge wherever he could imagine it to be, not proud or vain, or self-conscious—one whom Jesus looking on loved at once—an excellent young man, precisely the person whom our present-day Universities wish to turn out by the thousands—and, indeed, I wish they could, provided it is not done by machine—only when they have turned them out, polished up to this point by training and by advice, models of conduct and of temperate thinking—do not let surprise invade the trainers too much, if they should happen to hear that the young men and women are saying to themselves, "What lack I yet?" And answering in two ways. One class—quite confident that they have got everything they need for life, saying, "I lack nothing," and becoming for the most part clever persons, who in after life do not move the world at all—and the other class, touched by the wave of the infinite and capable of transmuting it into thought or feeling, all in a moment open their eyes like Faust—"What lack I yet—why everything?"

So it was with the young man. He moved on for a long time easily, quite content, respecting others and respected; a model of conduct. At last, one day, a new thing happened. He stayed to listen to a teacher in the fields. He saw Jesus, and with that strange disturbing power that Jesus had—and which to this day his words possess, as if they came from some far off world which yet is near at hand—words which those who can hear them know are enough to prove the spiritual world—the young man was startled out of his world of common place, out of the seen and the temporal. A silent harp he knew not of within was smitten, and every chamber of his inward house rang, thrilling with the sound. Unspeakable words of the eternal life—God prophesying in his soul, crying, "I am here, didst thou not know it?"—came with the sound. The spirit of the man woke within him.

Instantly all his daily life seemed nought—even a dream; his past religion formality, his careful conduct only a shred of what he ought to do—swept out of the valley in which he had lived so long, and placed upon the peak of the sea cliff of aspiration. And he looked forth on the boundless ocean of the ideal life, whose beauty, once seen, for ever lures our sails, and which, though we fly from its wild attraction to the dens and caves of the earthly life, we never, never can forget.

Scarcely conscious of what it was that had so changed him, the young ruler could not keep still. "Master," so came the first words, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He was not content, and the cry of the spiritual life came out of him—"What, what lack I yet?"

This was the very man, provided he had love enough, that Jesus wanted for his work. But the question was—"Was there power behind the longing? the power of that love which can, not only feel the rush but do the work of love." Many a teacher who loved the young man would have cherished the feeling, encouraged the rich and pleasant fellow to follow with him, said, that he would soon have developed further, liked him perhaps better than Peter and John. But Jesus was made of different stuff. He had the true iron in the blood. A world-wide work was in his hands. Those who were to carry it forward must be ready to give up all for it. Here was one who had the impulse to do the highest thing. Could he do it? And

at once Jesus tested him! How? Thou hast the wish. Wilt thou put it into form? If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me! Alas! he had not strength to do it. The dream of his higher life remained a dream; his will was too feeble to realise it, he went away and walked no more with Christ. An ever mournful and not an exciting sorrow dwelt in his heart—the sorrow of one who had lost contentment with his former life. He had seen the revelation of the nobler life. He never forgot it, and it remained with him always, the indescribable pain of lonely hours.

It is thus we are frequently tested in life. There rises before us every now and then the image of what we might be if we would put forth all our strength; opportunities are offered us of becoming greater than we are; duties from which we shrink, but which call us with imperative voices, and in doing which we we know that we rise to the height of our capacity, summon us like trumpets to a nobler battle. In the light of this new revelation, which is the spirit of God Himself showing us as in a glass what we should become if we would be perfect, our old life of well-ordered habits dwindles into wonderful smallness. It is Christ saying to us—"Yet lackest thou one thing." Mournful, mournful it is for us if, having the awful power of seeing divine things, we want the strength to take them up, to put them into form, and go away following Christ no more. Our fall will be in proportion to our power.

A Handful of Seeds.

Very slight things make epochs in married life.

Joy is the best of wine.

Bigotry murders religion, to frighten fools with her ghost.

What is charity? A mantle of heaven's own weaving, lent us to cover our neighbours' imperfections.

There is nothing which men are so fond of, and withal so careless, as life.

How to destroy Congregational Singing:

AN AMERICAN PRESCRIPTION.

The American Churches seem, from all we hear, to have been very successful in destroying congregational singing; but as yet the destruction does not appear to be complete. The Rev. J. De Witt Talmage, in the *New York Independent*, gives a prescription for finishing the work quickly and thoroughly. Perhaps his suggestions may be useful to some English congregations. He says:—

"There has been an effort made for the last twenty years to kill congregational singing. The attempt has been tolerably successful; but it seems to me that some rules might be given by which the work could be done more quickly and completely. What is the use of having it lingering on in this uncertain way? Why not put it out of its misery? If you are going to kill a snake, kill it thoroughly, and do not let it keep on wagging its tail till sundown. Congregational singing is a nuisance, anyhow, to many of the people. It interferes with their comfort. It offends their taste. It disposes their nose to flexibility in the upward direction. It is too democratic in its tendency. Down with congregational singing and let us have no more of it.

"The first rule for killing it is to have only *such tunes as the people cannot sing.*

"In some churches it is the custom for choirs at each service to sing *one* tune which the people know. It is very generous of the choir to do that. The people ought to be very thankful for the donation. They do not deserve it. They are all 'miserable offenders' (I heard them say so), and, if permitted *once* in a service to sing, ought to think themselves highly favoured. But I oppose this singing of even the *one* tune that the people understand. It spoils them. It gets them hankering after more. Total abstinence is the only safety; for, if you allow them to imbibe at all, they will, after a while, get into the habit of drinking too much of it, and the first thing you know they will be going around drunk on sacred psalmody. Besides that, if you let them sing one tune at a service, they will be putting their oar into the other tunes

and bothering the choir. There is nothing more annoying to the choir, at some moment when they have drawn out a note to exquisite fineness, thin as a split hair, to have some blundering elder to come in with a 'Praise ye the Lord!' Total abstinence, I say! Let all the churches take the pledge even against the milder musical beverages; for they who tamper with champagne cider soon get to Hock and old Burgundy.

"Now if *all* the tunes are new, there will be no temptation to the people. They will not keep humming along, hoping that they will find some bars down where they can break into the clover pasture. They will take the tune as an inextricable conundrum, and give it up. Besides that, Pisgah, Ortonville, and Brattle-street are old-fashioned. They did very well in their day. Our fathers were simple-minded people, and the tunes fitted them. But our fathers are gone, and they ought to have taken their baggage with them. What right have people to sing who know nothing about rhythmics, melodies, dynamics? The old tunes ought to be ashamed of themselves when compared with our modern beauties. Let Dundee and Portuguese Hymn and Silver-street hide their heads beside what we heard not long ago in a church—just where I shall not tell. The minister read the hymn beautifully. The organ began, and the choir sang, as near as I could understand, as follows:

"'Oo—aw—gee—bah
Ah—me—la—he
O—pah—sah—dah
Wo—haw—gee-e-e-e.'

"My wife, seated beside me, did not like the music. But I said, 'What beautiful sentiment! My dear, it is a pastoral. You might have known that from "*Wo-haw-gee!*" You have had your taste ruined by attending the Brooklyn Tabernacle.' The choir repeated the last line of the hymn four times. Then the prima donna leaped on to the first line, and slipped and fell on to the second, and that broke and let her through into the third. The other voices came in to pick her up, and got into a grand wrangle, and the bass and soprano had it for about ten seconds; but the soprano beat (women always do), and the bass rolled down into the cellar, and the soprano went up into the garret, but the latter kept on squalling as though the bass, in leaving her, had wickedly torn out all her back hair. I felt anxious about the soprano, and looked back to see if she had fainted; but found her reclining in the arms of a young man who looked strong enough to take care of her.

"Now I admit that we cannot all have such things in our churches. It costs like sixty. In the Church of the Holy Bankak it costs one hundred dollars to have sung that communion piece—

"'*Ye wretched, hungry, starving poor!*'

But, let us come as near to it as we can. The tune 'Pisgah' has been standing long enough on 'Jordan's stormy banks.' Let it pass over and get out of the wet weather. Good-bye 'Antioch,' 'Harwell,' and 'Boylston.' Good-bye till we meet in glory.

"But, if the prescription of new tunes does not end congregational singing, I have another suggestion. Get an irreligious choir, and put them in a high balcony, back of the congregation. I know choirs who are made up chiefly of religious people, or those at least respectful for sacred things. That will never do, if you want to kill the music. The theatrical troupe are not busy elsewhere on Sabbath, and you can get them at half price to sing the praises of the Lord. Meet them in the green room at the close of the 'Black Crook,' and secure them. They will come to church with opera glasses, which will bring the minister so near to them, they can, from their high perch, look clear down his throat and see his sermon before it is delivered. They will make excellent poetry on Deacon Goodsoul as he carries around the missionary box. They will write dear little notes to Gonzaldo, asking him how his cold is and how he likes gum drops. Without interfering with the worship below, they can discuss the comparative fashionableness of the 'Basque' and 'The Polonaise,' the one lady vowing she thinks the first style is 'horrid' and the other saying that she would rather die than be seen in the latter—all this while the chorister is gone out during sermon to refresh himself with a mint-julep, hastening back in time to sing the last hymn. How much like heaven it will be when, at the close of a solemn service, we are favoured with snatches from Verdi's 'Trovatore,' Meyerbeer's 'Huguenots,' and Bellini's 'Somnambula' from such artists as—

Prima Donna Soprano,
MADEMOISELLE SQUINTELLE,
from Grand Opera House, Paris.

SIGNOR BOMBASTANI,
Basso Buffo,
from Royal Italian Opera.

CARL SCHNEIDERINE,
First Baritone,
of His Majesty's Theatre, Berlin.

"If after three months of taking these two prescriptions the congregational singing is not thoroughly dead, send me a letter directed to my name, with the title of O.F.M. (Old Fogey in Music), and I will, on the receipt thereof, write another prescription, which I am sure will kill it dead as a door-nail, and that is the deadest thing in all history."

A Blister for Unitarians!

It is difficult to take seriously the promoters of the Reunion Conference at Lucerne. No doubt they take themselves as seriously as if they held Christendom in the hollow of their hands, while the world looked on "with wonder whist," anxiously asking, What will they do with it? But to the cool, outside observer the whole business is both fussy and ridiculous. Here are a number of well-meaning divines anxious to bring together in a real unity the various sections of English Christianity, who have so little of the spirit of unity to begin with, that they cannot agree to meet together for the discussion of the question in any church building on English soil, but must betake themselves to the neutral air and ground of a foreign land. Such a conference could not be held in an English cathedral,—that would be to countenance schism,—and the Churchmen who hob-nob with Dissenters at Lucerne would not meet them in the City Temple. The hollowness of the whole proceeding is seen in the fact that the men who foregather in Switzerland will not meet together for common worship in England.

We desire to speak with nothing but sympathy of the desire for Christian unity. But an ounce of practice at home is worth a ton of rhetoric abroad, and we shall believe in the reality of the Bishop of Worcester's professions when he actually preaches in Dr. Dale's pulpit. Meanwhile it is a grave question whether English Christianity will not lose far more than it will gain by the swallowing up of all denominations in one definite organisation. The divisions of English Christianity have been on the whole the result of its vitality. Denominationalism has a good side to it of which much might be said.

But the unreality of the Lucerne *eirenicon* has been made apparent by the ferocious attack on Unitarians with which it is accompanied. Last year's conference at Guildhall seems to have aroused a suspicion in the minds of a few Churchmen that somehow or other a dark and subtle plot was being hatched for opening the door to heretics. There was actually a Unitarian minister present! Now as we know one little leaf of garlic will infect a thousand tons of water, so the presence of our friend for three days gave the whole three months' proceedings a suspicious taste. This year the trumpet has given no uncertain sound. Loud and many and monotonous have been the asseverations of orthodoxy. Every speaker has made emphatic declaration of his belief in the Deity of Christ. In the biggest of phrases it was announced that Reunion, Christian Brotherhood, Christian Fellowship, and Christian Charity were confined to Trinitarians. Reunion has been hitherto impossible because these various sects and churches had only breath to damn each other. They have resolved that they will damn each other no more—at which we rejoice—but, alas! the habit of damning has become so ingrained that even Reunion is impossible if nobody is left on whom to spend our curses! Happy thought! Let us re-unite the English churches on the basis of a common damnation of Unitarians! This appears to have been the spirit of the Lucerne meetings. It was left to the shouting and hysterical Mr. Price Hughes to give the feeling public expression. "It would be absolutely impossible for us to combine or co-operate with Unitarians as such on distinctively

Christian grounds." "We deliberately exclude the Unitarians." "We are sorry, but it is absolutely necessary" *i.e.*, to shut the door in the face of any Unitarian applying for admission—and so forth. Mr. Hughes is good enough to say that this statement causes him some pain, because he enjoys the friendship of many estimable Unitarians, "men of the *highest character and devotion*, with whom I am always most happy to co-operate"—in anything except religion!

Well, we should like to know who Mr. Hughes' Unitarian friends are who consent to be patronised by him, and are grateful for his permission to sit in the servants' hall. In Mr. Hughes' view the highest character and devotion are as nothing combined with the right shibboleth about the person of Christ, and of course it is nought to this self-appointed judge of Christian discipleship that he flatly contradicts Jesus Himself, who said, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and not at all by their being able to say "Lord, Lord," with the correct accent.

The revival of antipathy to Unitarians is a very curious feature of our times. A few years ago it seemed as if the flames of bigotry were dying down, and as if the day were drawing near when questions of intellectual definition would no longer keep the disciples of Jesus apart. A great secular journal like the *Birmingham Daily Post* remarks, "Just now it seems to be an evangelical fashion to fall foul of Unitarians pretty sharply."

Meanwhile, leaving Mr. Price Hughes to put his hot blister on Unitarianism at his leisure—or his haste, we should like to ask some of the cooler heads of the Conference—say Dr. Mackennal, C. Berry, and Professor Bruce—whether they are really prepared to deny that Channing was a true disciple of Jesus? whether they are satisfied with a Catholicity which would keep Dr. Martineau out of the Christian Church? whether they are prepared to refuse the Christian name to Whittier and Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose hymns they sing? whether they think it is in accord with the spirit of Jesus Christ to close the door of Christian communion against men who own the same Master and are as loyal in their discipleship as themselves?

"Rational Piety."*

This is a delightful and suggestive book. It supplies a long-felt want. Liberal Christianity in England has been sadly lacking in devotional and simply religious literature. We have been militant, theological, scholarly, but when we have wanted to help and nourish simple piety, we have had to turn to orthodox sources. Our American brethren are far ahead of us in this respect. In such charming books as Gannett's "Blessed be Drudgery," Savage's "Light in the Cloud," etc., we have that combination of piety with rationalism, of devout faith with the most open mind, which thousands of our people are craving for, without exactly knowing what it is they want. And so they turn to Thomas a Kempis, and to Keble's "Christian Year" when they want something to help the meditations of a quiet hour. Yet in these they often find a jarring note—an ecclesiastical assumption, or a theological ghost, or a slight on the faculty of reason, which cannot but be offensive to the nineteenth century mind, and to those who have learned that there is nothing incompatible between the freest exercise of reason and the fervours of faith. To such persons Dr. Crosskey's book will be welcome as water to thirsty lips. It consists of extracts from sermons preached during a long and successful ministry, arranged in orderly sequence under various headings, and yet so complete in themselves as to enable the ordinary reader to dip into the book anywhere and find a helpful paragraph. There are "illustrative metaphors; confessions of personal feelings and experiences; short statements of guiding principles for the formation of character," such as may "serve to arouse serious thought during a few of those spare minutes in which very often the tone and temper and the life of the whole passing day are determined." "Selected Fruit from a Noble Tree," might very well be the second title of Dr. Crosskey's latest service to our churches. That our readers may judge of the quality of this fruit for themselves we offer three or four specimens.

* A Handbook of Rational Piety, by Henry W. Crosskey, LL.D. Published by Philip Green, 4 and 5, Essex Street, Strand, W.C. Price 2s. 6d.

Here is something on "heresy" well said :—"The unpopularity of a cause is a divine challenge for its careful study. The stone rejected by the builders is the very stone to be considerately and conscientiously examined, to see if it may not be fitted to 'become the head of the corner.' Discarded principles of thought and conduct make majestic demands of their own upon the hearts and souls of men —in the great might of the excessive wrong that may perchance have been done unto them. Not once or twice only, to find the world's heroes, its prisons have had to be searched; not once or twice only has truth been found in those intellectual dungeons, heavily barred with iron prejudices, into which scorned heresies have been pitilessly thrust."

Here is a suggestive note on immortality :—"In the history of creation, *time* has been regarded as of no consequence at all. It has taken millions of years to fashion our seas and continents. Taking the mere surface of the globe, tens of thousands of years have been employed in cutting the course of a river, and in heaping up a mere ridge of sand and clay. But by virtue of his mental powers, his affections, and his conscience, a man is greater than a world. Since ages have been spent upon the evolution of what is less than man, there is every rational ground for believing that for the full growth of man himself time will never fail."

What can be better said about "Good Works" than this?—"The feeling that we can do very little worth doing for God or man not unseldom makes us do less than we *can* do, and prevents us from exerting all the moral energy which is latent within us. Yet the humblest deeds lovingly done can never be unwelcome to a loving heart. *More than children can do*, no Heavenly Father, any more than an earthly father, can demand. My little chiid sometimes brings me wild flowers from the field, and insists that her handful of dandelions, daisies, and meadow-sweet shall be put into the vase side by side with the moss-rose and the garden fuchsia; they are *her* gift, which she offers with proud hand and proud heart, and there, in the place of honour, they must be, and the garden flowers have no such loveliness and perfume, because they are laden with no such love. Even so, between man and God, these poor wild flowers we bring from earth may yet hope for a place among the amaranths gathered by the saints in Paradise, if offered with childlike faith and joy."

Listen also to this warning, of which Liberal Christians often stand in need :—"Suppose that all the people agreed in their opinions, and even supposing that all those opinions were thoroughly *rational*—do you think, do you imagine, do you dream that the 'world, the flesh, and the devil' would lose all their power, and that there would be no more 'lust of the flesh, and lust of the eye, and pride of life?' But suppose that everyone in England desired, with all the strength of his mind and passion of his heart—

> 'To feel, to think, to do
> Only the holy right
> To yield no step in the awful race,
> No blow in the fearful fight;'

suppose that everyone in England respected, admired, reverenced, only and solely whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, and lovely in the sight of God; suppose that everyone in England strove with the energy and determination of a noble enthusiasm to become Christ-like, not counting himself 'to be apprehended,' but 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,' should we not *then* indeed dwell in a kingdom of heaven upon earth?"

How pregnant are these words on Capacity and Destiny: "Live as nobly as we may, this world does not and cannot exhaust the capacities of the nature we possess. Let us live as gently and generously as we can; it will be impossible to satisfy the loving heart; nay, the more loving the heart the less content it is with aught it can do to manifest its love."

We have said nothing about the purely literary merits of this handbook, nor of the touch of scientific culture which adorns its pages. Both are of a very high order. We commend it to our readers on the ground of its earnest, manly, devout presentation of some of the great, deep things of God and the soul, in the conviction that it is a book with a message for all men in those moments of life when the heart communes with itself and is still.

Notes for Sunday School Lessons.

FROM LONGFELLOW'S SHORTER POEMS.

I.—THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH; OR, WORK AND WORSHIP.

Rom. xii., 11; Matt. v., 16; Col. iii., 23; 2 Peter, i, 5-8.

One of the best known of Longfellow's short poems. The picture that of an industrious and pious workman. The smithy amid country surroundings. The smith in harmony with his environment, fitted by nature for his work, as all should be. The error of looking for happiness outside duty is not his. His heart is in his work, and

> "The heart
> Giveth grace unto every art"

in more than one sense. Diligent in business, earning whatever he can, thrifty, he is respectable and respected, healthy and contented. Employment is called by Galen "Nature's physician," and indolence the "mother of misery." Cheerful and genial, his forge is a centre of attraction to the children; a gruff or surly fellow would soon be left alone. The man not slothful in business is not always fervent in spirit, and seldom does the man who hates work love worship. This man's work is a part of his religion, and his religion a part of his work. Sunday, which frees him from toil, renews his whole nature. The mind ennobles, and not the blood, and beneath the rough exterior we find a gentle and devout spirit. Worship is a joyful reality, and not a melancholy formality, as with many. Life's experiences have exercised but not hardened him. He has been made a better man by them. The worship that reminds him of heaven, and touches him even to tears, sends him back to the duties of life prepared to do all things heartily as unto the Lord. A more pleasant example of practical Christianity it would be difficult to find.

Things to be remembered: Our heart should be in our work. Happiness is to be found in doing our duty. Idleness, as old Samuel Johnson says, is the dead sea, which swallows up all virtue, and the self-made sepulchre of a living man. The whole duty of man includes serving God and keeping His commandments. Religion should be as much at home in the workshop as the church. The duty of to-day should earn to-night's repose. That it is possible, whatever our work, to make our life a psalm of worship and praise to God.

II.—EXCELSIOR; OR, ONWARDS AND UPWARDS.

Matt. v., 1-14; Phil. iii., 12-16; 2 Peter iii., 18.

This much-criticised poem is a parable of what life should be—an ascent. Here we have a high aim, great courage, and a strong will combined. An ancient inscription on a pagan temple bids us "consider the end." This youth has done so, and fearlessly takes the upward way. He is not to be detained by old experience, modern prudence, love's entreaty, or traditional reverence. What he feels he *ought* to do that he does. He is not indifferent to present good; self-denial is not easy, but duty *must* be done. So up life's Alpine height he climbs. Far up he drops at last, faithful unto death to the inward voice; in death as in life calling us higher. One thing for ever is Godlike, says Carlyle, and that is heroism, and heroism is self-sacrifice. We are not all called to show just such virtue, but we are called to be true to our better selves. Two kinds of life are ever before us—that of the flesh and the spirit. We are either going up or down.

> "By our *proper* motion we ascend
> Up to our native height; descent and fall
> To us is adverse."

Without a definite purpose in life we do but beat the air. "Life must have a great purpose or it rots." Jesus says, "My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father." He is the highest example of the right life. "He who chooses the right and shuns the base," says Zoroaster, "has the Eternal for his friend, brother, and father."

Lessons: Cherish high aims, and try to realise them. In books and life, learn to admire rightly. Have the courage of your opinions, but let them be good. Let your living be helpful living.

> "I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
> I woke and found that life was duty."

III.—THE GOLDEN MILESTONE, OR THE ABIDING INFLUENCE OF HOME.

Psalms cxxxiii., 1; Rom. xii., 10; 2 Peter iii., 1-12; 1 John iv., 7; Eph. vi., 1-4.

A winter sunset. The smoke from village hearths rising into the calm, crisp atmosphere,

and brightening windows telling of human homes. How varied the life within. Around the fires the aged looking back regretfully, the young looking forward hopefully, weeping here and rejoicing there. Where love builds its nest, where the patter of little feet is heard, where sorrows and joys are shared, where youths and maidens prepare for life's work, and the aged sit down and wait for rest, these are the sacred places of life. The Emperor Augustus set up a marble pillar with a golden tablet in the market place of Rome, to indicate the central point from which distance from the city was measured. He called it Milliarum Aureum, the Golden Milestone. Each man's native hearth, says the poet, is his golden milestone; the point to which the eye of memory turns. In the "Hanging of the Crane," he gives us a beautiful picture of a home in which

> "The light of love shines over all,
> Of love that says not mine and thine,
> But *ours;* for ours is thine and mine."

In the making of a *home* the mother comes first. "Home is where mother is." The Spanish proverb says, "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy." Next the father. "Is such a man a Christian?" "I have never lived with him," said Whitfield. The daughter of a deceased Unitarian minister (Rev. S. J. May) says, "I never heard my father utter an irritable word." Each of the children must help. Love must make all duties pleasant. There must be kindness, honour, truth, and self-sacrifice. Sons and daughters grow up and separate, but the memory of such a home is the seed of all their after good. A home should be "Sweet home," whether a rich or poor one. The memory of its hearth goes with man to the grave.

> "In his furthest wanderings still he sees it,
> Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,
> As he heard them
> When he sat with those who were, but are not."

Point to be dwelt upon: "Without hearts no home." The home shapes and colours the life. Kind words never die. A Christian home a public blessing. The duty of every member of a family to try to make home what God meant it to be.

IV.—THE BELEAGURED CITY; OR, FAITH'S VICTORY.

Mark ix., 24; Heb. iii., 12; Heb. ii., 6; Psalm xxvii.

A strange old legend of an army of spectres besieging the city of Prague. They surround the city from midnight to dawn, but the bell which calls the faithful to prayer affrights them, and, panic-stricken, they beat a hasty retreat. This is used to illustrate the manner in which we may vanquish fears and doubts, the spectres of the mind. Such faith in God as leads us to pray to Him is the spell at which they sweep away. A lack of faith which hinders prayer is a common disease. Literature has dealt largely with this. Faust exclaims, as he listens to the Easter bells and the Easter hymn, "I hear you, O heavenly tones, mighty and tender, I hear the message well, but faith is wanting in my heart. My tears flow, but the earth claims me again." "Hamlet" and "Childe Harolde" are in the same condition. But faith is our natural state. Wordsworth tell us we come into this world trailing clouds of glory, heaven lies about us in infancy, the shades of the prison house begin to close upon the growing boy, the youth is still attended by the vision splendid, but the man perceives it die and fade away. The morally strong are those who have fought their doubts and regained lost faith. The nature of our own lives depends upon whether we have faith in God or not. Others are helped or hindered by it. "I will listen to any man's convictions," says Goethe, "but pray keep your doubts to yourself, I have plenty of my own." Those who have read "Robert Elsmere" will remember what poor Richards on his death-bed said to Robert,—"I cared about nothing when you came. You have been God to me. I have seen Him in you." Doubt the creeds that make God unlovely, doubt those that degrade man, but keep your faith in God, Duty, and Immortality.

Points to be expanded.—Belief re-acts on character. To doubt God is to weaken ourselves. Trust your instincts as well as your reason. Faith necessary to happiness. Belief in a future essential to a right use of the present world.

> "Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell."

J. HARDINGE MATTHEWS.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Story of a Weathercock.

Whenever I go to London, I always stand at the corner of the Bank of England for a minute or two, watching the crowd of busy men hurrying everywhere. What thousands of cares they carry! How many anxieties; how many a heart is being crushed, and many a brain giving way under a load of business. What wealth is pouring along! What power! Then I look at the Royal Exchange. It is pleasant to see the London sparrows, though they are a little black and grimy, chirping on the massive cornices, as free and happy as possible, above the din and awful hurry of the great city. The aching hearts and anxious faces on the pavement beneath are nothing to them. They have no cares, no anxieties. They seem to know what the great letters mean which are cut out in the stones on which they hop—"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." God keeps the sparrows, and they are happy. I wish the busy city men would watch the sparrows, and read the great city text. But the sparrows and the text are not the most attractive things about the Exchange. I am sure if you looked at it, you would think as I do—that the weathercock is the most singular and curious thing about the building. It is not like any other weathercock in England, or, I should think, in the world; for there, twisting on the pinnacle of the spire, is a monster grasshopper: and I'll tell you how it came to be there.

About three hundred and fifty years ago, a woman with a little baby in her arms was trudging along a country lane. I am sorry to say it—because we never like to hear of a mother not loving her baby—that the woman had determined to leave the baby-boy behind her. Presently, after looking this way and that, to see no one was watching her, she climbed over a gate into a field, and wrapping the baby in its little shawl, she laid it down n the grass so gently as not to awake it, and then—never even looking behind her—she climbed over the gate again into the lane, and went on her journey. The baby soon woke, and began to cry; and it cried for a long, long time. And at last, tired and hungry, and hot with the sun—for it was a fine summer's day—it was wearied out, and dropped off to sleep again. "But God heard the voice of the lad," and see how simply He brought help for the little one. By-and-by, down the lane came a schoolboy. He was whistling away, as happy as ever he could be; he had come out of school and was going home. He lived at the farmhouse a little further up the lane. Now he gathered a few primroses, now he scampered after a butterfly, now he had a shy at a bird; but just as he came to the gate over which the woman had climbed, he heard a grasshopper chirping away so loudly, that the boy sprang over the gate to catch him; and there was the baby, fast asleep. Far more pleased than if he had caught a hundred grasshoppers, the boy took up the little fellow, and ran home with his prize. The kind farmer's wife, although she had many children of her own, at once determined to keep the little orphan who had been saved from death by a grasshopper.

Years passed away, and the baby became a strong boy; the boy grew to be a man; he went to London, and became a merchant. God blessed all he did, and he rose to be the most noted man in the city. Queen Elizabeth was then on the throne, and often did she send for Sir Thomas Gresham—for the little deserted boy had become a knight—to consult him on the great affairs of the State. Just three hundred years ago Sir Thomas Gresham founded the Exchange. The Queen came to dine with him, and to lay the first stone; and there upon the topmost pinnacle Sir Thomas placed a grasshopper, and there it is to-day, to tell the busy toiling city, and to tell you and me, when we go to see the city, that Almighty God will hear the infant's cry, and can save a valuable life by even such a little thing as a grasshopper.

The Fisherman's Wife.

The wind bloweth wildly; she stands on the shore;
She shudders to hear it, and will evermore.
The rush of the waves as they rose and they fell,
Evermore to her fancy will sound like a knell!

"When, mother, dear mother, will father return?
His supper is ready, the sticks brightly burn;
His chair is beside them, with dry shoes and coat,
I'm longing to kiss him,—Oh, where is the boat?

"Why does he not come with his fish on his arm?
He *must* want his supper; he cannot be warm;
I'll stroke his cold cheek, with his wet hair I'll play.
I want so to kiss him,—Oh, why does he stay?"

Unheeding the voice of that prattler, she stood
To watch the wild war of the tempest and flood;
One little black speck in the distance doth float,
'Tis her world—'tis her life—'tis her fisherman's boat!

Her poor heart beats madly 'twixt hope and despair,
She watches his boat with a wild, glassy stare,
Ah! 'tis hid beneath torrents of silvery spray,
Ah! 'tis buried mid chasms that yawn for their prey.

Over mountains of horrible waves it is tost,
It is far—it is near—it is safe—it is *lost!*
The proud waves of ocean unheeding rush on,
But, alas! for the little black speck—it is gone!

Oh! weep for the fisherman's boat, but weep more
For the desolate woman who stands on the shore!
She flies to her home with a shrill cry of pain,
To that home where her loved one returns not again.

All night she sits speechless, her child weeping near,
But no sob shakes her bosom,—her eye feels no tear;
In heartbroken, motionless, stupid despair,
She sits gazing on—at his coat and his chair.

Hark! a click of the latch,—a hand opens the door,
'Tis a step—her heart leaps—'tis *his* step on the floor;
He stands there before her all dripping and wet,
But his smile and his kiss have warm life in them yet.

He is here, he is safe, though his boat is a wreck;
He sinks in his chair—while her arms clasp his neck,
And a sweet little voice in his ear whispers this,
"Do kiss me, dear father—I long for a kiss."

"Blessed to Give."

The kingly sun gives forth his rays ;
Asks no return ; demands no praise ;
But wraps us in strong arms of life,
And says distinct through human strife,
"If thou wouldst truly, nobly live,
Give,—ever give."

The rustic flower, upspringing bright,
And answering back that regal light,
Fills all the air with fragrant breath,
And writes in myriad hues beneath,
"If thou wouldst gaily, gladly live,
Give,—ever give."

The merchant-rain, which carries on
Rich commerce 'twixt the earth and sun ;
The autumn mist ; the springtide shower ;
All whisper soft to seed and flower,
"We know no other life to live
But this,—we give."

Suggestive warnings crowd the earth ;
Glad sounds of labour, songs of mirth,
From creatures both of field and air ;
Who, whilst they take their rightful share,
Still truly chant, "We chiefly live
To give,—to give."

Oh, man, the gem and crown of all,
Take thou this lesson. Heed the call
Of these less-gifted creatures near ;—
The rather,—that Christ's voice most dear
Once said, whilst here he deign'd to live,
"Blessed to give."

F. E. WILSON.

CONSOLATION.—Now, God be praised, who, to believing souls, gives light in darkness, comfort in despair !—*Shakespeare.*

RICHES.—I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue ; the Roman word is better, *impedimenta ;* for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue ; it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march ; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory.—*Lord Bacon.*

THE IDEAL CHURCH.—The Church is really a banding together of people to set wrongs right.—*James Huntington.*

PERSECUTION.—He who persecutes a good man makes war against himself and all mankind.—*Confucius.*

CONFIDENCE.—Confide to God that which thou hast from Him, O, thou soul weary of wandering ! Confide to the truth that which is from the truth within thee, and thou shalt lose nothing.—*Saint Augustine.*

DEATH.—I look upon death to be as necessary to our constitutions as sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning.—*Franklin.*

News from the Field.

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION.—We beg to call the attention of our friends to the Autumnal Meetings of the Union, which are to be held on Monday, October 16th, at Kidderminster. There will be a Conference in the afternoon at 3 o'clock, and a public meeting in the evening. The Kidderminster friends will provide tea at five o'clock The following ministers are expected to take part in the meetings : Revs. Dr. Crosskey, James Crossley, A. A. Charlesworth, J. C. Street, J. Harrison, Joseph Wood, etc., etc. We hope to have an encouraging day.

BANBURY.—The annual harvest thanksgiving services were held on Sunday last, the Rev. H. Hill conducting divine worship and giving the connective readings in a service of song in the afternoon. On the last-named occasion there was a large congregation, and the service, entitled "Jack's half-crown," was given in a very pleasing manner by the choir, who received the assistance of members of other choirs in the town. In the evening the pastor gave a appropriate discourse, and *the festival passed off very successfully*, Mrs. J. T. Fletcher, the organist, adding considerably to the attractiveness of the musical part of the services. Thanks to several willing and deft workers, the interior of the chapel was rendered exceedingly pretty by the floral decorations and wealth of other "fruits of the earth." In front of the communion rails were two tables loaded with fruit, flowers, pot plants, and vegetables very tastefully arranged, conspicuous objects in the foreground being loaves of bread embellished with ears of corn. Handsome specimens of garden produce, with loaves of bread, lay in profusion on the floor. The sill of the large window behind was filled with greenery, flowers, &c. On the upper ledge of the prayer desk were placed bouquets of choice flowers among a groundwork of evergreens, from which was suspended flowers and fruit, and on a table in front of the desk was a pretty arrangement of beautifully-tinted foliage, flowers, and fruit. The front of the pulpit was ornamented with a design in fruits and wheat ; acorns, grapes, pears, apples, plums, and tomatoes being also used with excellent effect. The whole of the gas standards were hidden by a wealth of corn, evergreens, foliage, and bright-hued flowers, and looked strikingly pretty. From the chandeliers depended trailing greenery and flowers. The general effect of the decoration was very creditable to the taste and industry of those who carried out the work.

BIRMINGHAM (HUNT STREET MISSION).—On Monday, September 18th, the Bishop of Worcester paid a visit to Hunt Street, and was conducted over the Mission premises by Mr. Clarke, who explained the work carried on. We congratulate the Bishop on his common sense and good feeling. Mr. Clark may well feel proud of a Mission from which a Bishop is willing to learn a lesson.

THE OLD MEETING CHURCH, BIRMINGHAM.—A large and very beautiful painted window, the gift of R. Peyton, Esq., has been placed at the east end of the church, and on Sunday, September 10th, it was formally dedicated to the worship of God. The service was made special for the occasion, and the centre subject of the window being the figure of Jesus preaching the sermon on the Mount, Mr. Wood took for the object of his discourse "The sufficiency of the Sermon on the Mount as a religion for mankind." There was a crowded congregation, and great satisfaction was expressed at the success with which the design had been carried out. The work had been executed by Messrs. Heaton, Butler, and Baines, and reflects great credit on all concerned. The drawing is free from the stiff angularities often seen in such windows, and the colouring is both rich and refined. The window is intended to represent in pictured story and symbol, the fundamental characteristics of the pure and simple religion of Jesus. The central subject, occupying the lower half of the two central lights, depicts Christ preaching the Sermon on the Mount, the very sum and substance of the Christian religion. Surrounding this, above, beneath, and in the side lights we have the Beatitudes written upon scrolls. These are understood as the spiritual portrait of the Master himself and the ideal of all true discipleship. The middle portions of the four lights are filled with emblematical figures of four of the principal graces of the Christlike mind—Hope, Love, Truth and Faith. These form the prominent features of the window as awhole. The two subjects in the side lights — the martyrdom of St. Stephen and the interview of Peter and Cornelius—have been designed as embodying two leading ideas of the Liberal Christian Faith, namely: first, The Progressive Nature of Religion, since Stephen suffered martyrdom for fearlessly proclaiming that the old narrow, local, sectional view of religion must give way before the broad spiritual ideas of Jesus; and secondly, The Universal Nature of Christianity enunciated by Peter at his interview with Cornelius, when he gathered up in one simple sentence the eternal message of Jesus, "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." The subjects of the various sections of the window have been selected and arranged in the hope that the representation as a whole may appropriately express the religion and faith of those who worship in the Old Meeting Church.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR.—The forty-sixth anniversary of the opening of the Church of the Saviour was celebrated on Sunday, August 13th. The minister, the Rev. James C. Street, preached morning and evening to large congregatious. In the evening various musical selections were admirably rendered by the choir from the "Parable of the Ten Virgins," as it is interpreted in one of the cantatas by Gaul. In the course of his sermon in the morning, Mr. Street said that 46 years ago there came to not a few of them in tha community a tongue as glad as that which came to the scattered people of Israel. A young apostle of the religion of humanity had appeared in the community. He had spoken in a church but a few yards from the place wherein they were gathered that day. Out of the fulness of his heart he spoke, and men of the strangest kinds ga hered together to listen to him, and as they listened to him and caught the trembling accents of his prayers, they seemed to have found the religion they sought. And then came a time of tribulation and difficulty. Some of the men in that church said: "This man is preaching a new gospel; we will not listen to this new story;" and so they told him he must go. And then it was that those gathered together who were attracted by himself and by his teachings, and they said: "This man must stay with us; we cannot let him go;" and a meeting of his friends was called. Mr. Street introduced a letter, which had been placed in his hands a few days previously, which was written at the time when those friends were gathering together to know what they should do. The writer of the letter was at that time the Mayor of Birmingham—Robert Martineau. It was addressed to Mr. H. W. Tyndal, who himself did what he could to sustain Mr. Dawson in his work. In the letter Mr. R. Martineau expressed his deep regret that he was compelled to be absent from the meeting, but begged to be considered among those who were anxious to press forward at this important period to offer Mr. Dawson all possible sympathy, support, and encouragement in the great and glorious work in which he had engaged. He hoped that the fruits of his valuable labours would prove a cheering set-off against any temporary obstacles which might be thrown in his way by those ignorant, albeit conscientious, persons who would sacrifice the true life-giving spirit of Christianity for the sake of promoting or maintaining a mere creed. That letter, said Mr. Street, was written more than a year before the event took place which they were celebrating that day. The friends gathered together, and they decided that Mr. Dawson should have a hearing. Some of them would remember the meeting of people upon the spot where that church now stood—Mr. Alderman Cutler, Mr. Robert Martineau, and some of those whose faces he saw there that morning—and how on that occasion the first sods were cut, and a reverend prayer was uttered by George Dawson that that church should be consecrated to freedom, to brotherhood, and to righteousness. The men and women who united with Mr. Dawson on that day determined that neither here nor hereafter should there be anything that could close the door against any new truth, or against any man's doubts or difficulties, but that all should worship together in unity of spirit, and in the bonds of brotherly love.

NEWHALL HILL.—On August the 27th the annual scholars' flower service was held, when the church was beautifully decorated with a profusion of plants and flowers by the members of the Guild. Special hymns and an anthem were sung by the children. The Rev. A. A. Charlesworth preached at both services.—On Sunday, September 2nd, the Teachers held their Annual Meeting to receive the reports of the schools and elect officers for the ensuing year. The following facts are gathered from the reports. In the girls' school there were 117 pupils whose daily attendance was 73, and 15 teachers whose average attendance was 92 per cent. In the boys'

school there were 255 pupils, the average attendance being 88½ per cent., and 33 teachers with an average attendance of 95 per cent. Prizes were awarded in July to 33 girls for punctuality and good conduct, and seven received special prizes, given annually by Mr. H. Payton, J.P., for a perfectly regular attendance. In the boys' school there were 76 ordinary and 19 special prizes awarded. The special prizes in this school are given annually by Mr. W. J. Cross. Mr. Charlesworth presented the prizes and gave an address. Over 300 visits were made during the year by the teachers to the homes of absent pupils. In the Savings Club £180 were deposited. In July last the schools contributed £23 7s. 6d. to the Sunday School Fund in aid of the Children's Hospital. The Library contains over 3000 volumes, new books being added each year. — On Saturday afternoon, September 9th, the Guild (accompanied by the Warden, the Rev. Addison A. Charlesworth) spent a very pleasant time at Rednall, sixty-one members being present.—The Harvest Festival was held on Sunday, September 17th, the church being very effectively decorated for the occasion. Mr. Charlesworth preached suitable sermons to good congregations. All the bread and vegetables were afterwards sent to the Graham St. Charity School.— On the following day, Monday, the congregation held their annual meeting in the Schoolroom, under the presidency of Mr. S. S. Woollaston. The reports presented by the officers were very encouraging, the financial position being especially gratifying.—On the motion of Mr. John Stych, seconded by Mr. A. Derrington, a vote of thanks was unanimously and heartily passed to the Minister (Mr. Charlesworth) for his inspiring and helpful discourses Sunday after Sunday, and for the great interest he takes in all the work of the Church and Schools.

KIDDERMINSTER. — The above Church has been thoroughly cleaned, painted, and decorated, and was re-opened on Sunday, Sept. 10th. The Annual Harvest Festival was held on Sept. 17th and Tuesday evening 19th. The congregations were good at all services, especially the evening harvest festival, when between 500 and 600 attended, and for the first time known the evening offertory exceeded the morning. Eloquent and appropriate sermons were preached on each occasion by the minister, Rev. E. D. P. Evans. The outlay on the church organ and old trust property amounts to about £180. The congregation have been preparing for a year or two for this, and have subscribed and collected about £150, including nearly £20 from opening services and harvest festival.

WEST BROMWICH.—On Sunday evening, August 29th, a special Musical Service was held when the choir, assisted by friends, gave Hummel's "Alma Virgo" (English adaptation) and Spohr's "God thou art great." Mr. Harrison preached an appropriate sermon. There was a large congregation, and the special collection was fairly satisfactory.

WEST BROMWICH (PRESENTATION TO MR. W. H. NIGHTINGALE).—On Saturday evening, September 9th, a social gathering of teachers, scholars, and friends was held in the Schoolroom, for the purpose of recognising the valuable services which Mr. Nightingale had rendered to the Sunday School during a period of more than thirteen years. Mr. Harrison presided. An entertainment, consisting of songs, recitations, etc., was provided by the children. During the interval, Master Harry Reynolds, one of the scholars, presented to Mr. Nightingale, on behalf of his fellow scholars and the teachers, the following books:—"Green's Short History of the English People," "Gilman's Profit-Sharing," "Holder's Life of Charles Darwin," and "James Russell Lowell's Poems," as a small acknowledgment of his ever cheerful and faithful service.—Testimony to the value of his work in the school was borne by the Chairman, Mr. Alexander (present superintendent), Mr. Watts (a former superintendent), and Mr. J. G. Chillingsworth (church secretary). —Mr. Nightingale thanked his young friends and the teachers for this manifestation of their affection, and assured them that though he had gone to live in Birmingham he should not forget them, and that they might expect to see him among them occasionally.

WHITCHURCH.—The fifth winter session of the Highgate Men's Club was commenced on Wednesday week, when the Lord Mayor of Liverpool attended and formally opened a new reading-room. The chair was taken by the Rev. G. Eyre Evans, the president of the club, and he was supported by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, the Rev. J. Jacob (rector of Whitewell), and the Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S. (Shrewsbury), Mr. R. Robinson, Mr. Philip Barker, and Mr. Gresty. The proceedings opened with the singing of the hymn, "All men are equal in their birth," after which the Rev. E. Myers offered prayer. The Chairman said the club started in 1889 with one game of draughts and a copy of *Tit Bits*. He was glad to say that it had now developed into a premier position in the town. Last year there were 151 members on the books. He thought that shewed that they were doing some little good in the place where God had placed them. The club was opened to persons of all creeds and politics. The Lord Mayor, in declaring open the reading-room and fifth session of the club work, said that an institution such as that in a town like Whitchurch appeared to be a most useful addition to their town life. It supplied a want, which was felt in large towns, but which was more fully felt in a smaller community like that, and which enabled them to indulge in recreations and amusements other than those provided by the public-house. One feature which struck him in connection with the club was that of the reading-room, where members could have greater quietness, and the seclusion so desirable for the proper perusal of the books in the library. The idea of adding the private room was a very sensible and very desirable one, and was evidence of the earnestness they felt. He understood that in carrying out their idea they did not adopt the course which was sometimes followed in large towns of causing a whip round, but they had provided the room themselves. After a collection, in aid of the free library and other club purposes, a vote of thanks was given to the Lord Mayor, and the meeting closed with a hymn.

Midland Church Calendar for October.

ATHERSTONE: Unitarian Chapel.

Minister: Rev. J. Howard, of Tamworth. Service at 3 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM: Church of the Messiah, Broad Street.

Ministers: Revs. Dr. Crosskey, 117, Gough Road; and James Crossley, 5, Wyndham Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Hurst Street Mission.

Minister: Rev. W. J. Clarke, 160, Pershore Road. Services: 10-15, 2-45, and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Fazeley Street Mission.

Minister: Rev. T. Pipe, 59, Great Brook Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Newhall Hill Church.

Minister: Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, 18, South Road, Handsworth. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Old Meeting Church.

Minister: Rev. Joseph Wood, 120, Gough Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Church of the Saviour.

Minister: Rev. J. C. Street, 19, Charlotte Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BANBURY: Christchurch Chapel, Horse Fair.

Minister: Rev. H. Hill, 5, Crouch Street. Service: Evening, 6-30.

COSELEY: The Old Meeting House.

Minister: Rev. Henry Eachus. Services: 11 and 6-30.

CRADLEY: Netherend Chapel.

Minister: Rev. A. E. O'Connor. Services 11 and 6-30.

DUDLEY: The Old Meeting House.

Minister: Rev. A. H. Shelley. Services: 11 and 6-30.

EVESHAM: Oak Street Meeting House.

Minister: Vacant. Services: 11 and 6-30.

KIDDERMINSTER:

Minister: Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans. Services: 10-30 and 6-30.

KINGSWOOD: Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.

Minister: Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. Services: 11 and 6-30.

OLDBURY: Unitarian Meeting House.

Minister: Rev. Henry McKean, The Dingle, Oldbury. Services: 11 and 6-30.

SHREWSBURY: High Street Church.

Minister: Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., Claremont Hill. Services: 11 and 6-30.

STOURBRIDGE: Presbyterian Chapel.

Minister: Rev. A. W. Timmis. Services: 11 and 6-30.

TAMWORTH: Cole Hill Chapel.

Minister: Rev. J. Howard, 17, Aldergate. Services: 11 and 6-30.

THE LYE: Unitarian Chapel.

Minister: Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A. Service: 6-30.

WALSALL. Unitarian Free Church.

Minister: Rev. Peter Dean, 3, Sandwell Street. Services: 11-15 and 6-30.

Special: Thursday night, Oct. 5th, at 8 o'clock, Re-opening of the Chapel after Renovation; Preacher, REV. DR. CROSSKEY. Sunday, Oct. 8th, Preacher, REV. E. D. PRIESTLEY EVANS, of Kidderminster.

WEST BROMWICH: Lodge Road Chapel.

Minister: Rev. John Harrison, Jesson Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.

WHITCHURCH: Church of the Saviour, Highgate.

Minister: Rev. George Eyre Evans, 5, Mill Street. Services: 11, 2-15 for Children, 6-30.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Unity Church, Snow Hill.

Minister: Rev. L. G. Harris Crook, Oaklands Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.